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Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians, its Bureau and Teams of Specialists

Implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme 2017

Note by the secretariat

Addendum

Workshop on the Modernisation of Official Statistics

Summary

The document presents the key outcomes of the Workshop on the Modernisation of Official Statistics which took place from 22-23 November 2017 in Geneva. The meeting was organized following a decision of CES in June 2017.

The report is submitted to the Conference of European Statisticians for information.

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I. Introduction

1. The Workshop on the Modernisation of Official Statistics was held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 22-23 November 2017. The workshop was attended by representatives from the statistical offices of Canada, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as well as by representatives from the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

II. Organization of the seminar

2. Ms. T. Lalor, Chief of the Statistical Management and Modernisation Unit of the UNECE Statistical Division, opened the workshop and welcomed participants.

3. Mr. P. Dalton, Chair of the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS), gave the keynote presentation. His presentation acknowledged the work to date by the modernisation community on processes and data related topics. Although these topics are still important; there should also be a focus on products and services. Statistical organisations need to turn data into knowledge and information, and provide insight. It is necessary to be innovative with products and services without forgetting the core user base (citizens, researchers).

4. The participants adopted the agenda.

5. The following substantive topics were discussed at the meeting:

- Session 1: Reports from 2017 HLG-MOS projects;
- Session 2: Reports from Modernisation Groups;
- Session 3: Strategic Reflections;
- Session 4: Priorities for 2018.

6. All background documents and presentations for the workshop are available at http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/hlgbas/Workshops.

III. Summary of the discussion and main conclusions reached at the meeting

A. Reports from 2017 HLG-MOS Projects

1. Data Architecture Project

7. Mr. C. Vaccari presented the outcomes of the Data Architecture Project. The project developed the first version of the Common Statistical Data Architecture (CSDA). The purpose of the CSDA is to support statistical organisations in the design, integration, production and dissemination of official statistics. A number of interesting use cases were identified by the project, including the UN Global Platform. The first version of the Data Architecture will be released in January 2018.

2. Data Integration Project

8. Ms. J. Borowik presented the activities undertaken within the Data Integration project. The project team further developed the practical guide for data integration in statistical organisations. Input for the guide was supplemented by a survey of statistical organisations, which included a request for use cases. The guidelines will be released in January 2018. It is proposed that a future workshop on data integration could be held to update the guide and use cases.

B. Reports from Modernisation Groups

1. 'Telling stories with SDG data' Hackathon

9. Mr. M. Cuéllar-Rio introduced the 'Telling stories with SDG data' hackathon and demonstrated the winning product from the SDGs Mexico team. During the hackathon, fifteen teams from nine countries had 64.5 hours to create a product that told a story about the younger population using the SDG indicator "Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training" (Indicator 8.6.1).

2. Supporting Standards Group

10. Ms. M. Signore and Ms Eva Holm presented the work of this group. The activities in 2017 included reviews of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) and the Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM), the inclusion of GSBPM terms in the metadata glossary, and quality indicators for the GSBPM. A workshop on integrating geospatial and statistical standards was also organised during the year.

3. Sharing Tools Group

11. Mr. T. Gjaltema, Mr. T. Falch, Ms. E. Holm and Mr. P. Peyronnel reported on this group. The presentation highlighted the development of the variable package for the Logical Information Model, the Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA) in practice and work to provide additional detail and options for IT staff developing services. The "CSPA for Digital Transformation" workshop was held in July 2017.

4. Capabilities and Communication Group

12. Ms. A. Borowska and Mr. B. Whitestone presented the work of this group. Main activities have included risk management training, a training framework for key statistical skills based on GSBPM and assistance to effectively communicate HLG-MOS products (brochures, communication materials for hackathon, blogs). The group also organised the workshop on implementing efficiencies and quality of output during the year.

5. Blue Skies Thinking Network

13. Mr. B. Braaksma reported on the work of the network. Under the auspices of the network, a small group of countries have been discussing machine learning techniques for administrative data. The group will prepare a position paper on machine learning for official statistics.

C. Strategic Reflections

1. Investment Intentions

14. Mr. T. Gjaltema presented the results of the 2017 survey on the investment intentions of statistical organisations. This investment intention database is a good resource to review before starting a new project. It will provide information on whether organisations have completed or are currently undertaking similar projects.

2. Modernisation priorities: a view from Chief Statisticians

15. Mr. P. Dalton gave an overview of the modernisation priorities provided by the Chief Statisticians. Five themes were identified:

- Resilience in transformation – A big challenge for statistical organisations is to change the culture, create an appetite for risk around innovation and mobilise staff at all levels. It is important to embed innovation in the culture by empowering middle management and giving staff the assurance that they can take risks;
- Communicating – Traditionally, statistical organisations have not branded what they are and have to offer. Statistical organisations need to be proactive and increase their visibility. They have a role as provider of evidence for policy makers, and a role to provide evidence for citizens to hold decision makers accountable. There is a need to develop products that transform data and statistics into insightful information;
- Accessing and using new data sources - Using new data sources is a big challenge but not necessarily a new challenge. We have to know how to add value and tell stories that answer the questions that people want to know;
- Standards - The statistical standards are very important. GSBPM is embedded in many statistical organisations;
- Technology - Technology is critical to business operations and it is important to be aware of the challenges and opportunities it poses.

D. Priorities for 2018

16. Participants were invited to give short "soapbox" presentations. The following people presented:

- Ms. I. Choi – Future work topics identified by workshops in 2017;
- Mr. E. Baldacci – Data Access for Multi-Source Statistics;
- Mr. F. Cotton – The Questionnaire Generation Service (QGS);
- Mr. E. Deeben – The UN Global Platform;
- Mr. T. Falch – VTL Engine.

17. Ms. H. Salonen presented the HLG-MOS method of work. Representatives from the three Modernisation Groups gave short summaries of the work proposed for 2018.

18. Five project proposals were presented:

- Strategic Communication Framework Project – Mr. S. Dufour;
- Methodology Architecture Project – Mr. V. Galvin;
- Data Architecture Phase 2 Project – Mr. C. Vaccari;

- Integrated View of Modernisation Models Project – Ms. M. Signore;
- Base Ontology Project – Mr. Franck Cotton and Ms. M. Scannapieco;

19. Following presentations and discussions on these project proposals, the Workshop recommended that the 2018 projects should be the Strategic Communication Framework and Data Architecture Phase 2 projects.

20. In his summary, the Chair thanked participants for their active engagement both during the year, and over the two days of the Workshop. He thanked the participants, presenters and organisers for an excellent workshop